CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data will be analyzed using Fairclough's three dimensional framework. Textual analysis will be carried out to examine the content words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, that are used to describe the female body in print advertisements. By examining the writers' lexical choices the researcher will be able to determine what exactly constitute the non-ideal and the ideal body image for women in Malaysia and the values or qualities that are associated with the ideal body image. Before carrying out the textual analysis, a frequency count has also been performed to identify what are the words that are frequently used in the promotional texts.

The analysis in this chapter will be based on the previous work by Zuraidah Mohd Don (2003) who has conducted a study on the biasness of beauty standards on men and women using Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The aim of her study is to examine the role of discourse in propagating the attitudes and ideologies regarding feminine beauty myth which resulted in its acceptance as the truth instead of merely a construct. The data for her study was extracted from various beauty product advertisements.

Like the study conducted by Zuraidah Mohd Don (2003), this present study will focus on lexical choices and the intensity of the words employed in the promotional texts. For example, the adjective 'beautiful' can exist in various degree of intensity such as 'beautiful', 'very beautiful', 'so beautiful', 'absolutely beautiful' and so on. In this

analysis, the researcher will also take into account the role they play in legitimizing the claims made by the advertisers.

In this analysis, the words will be examined to determine whether they are positively or negatively lexicalized. Positive lexicalization reflects that something is desirable while negative lexicalization shows that something is not desirable. The strategy of negative lexicalization, according to Zuraidah (2003), is employed by the promotional texts to draw attention to the flaws in the female body and face. By looking at positive and negative lexicalization in this present study, the researcher will be able to uncover the various ideological meanings that contribute to the construction of the ideal body image for women that shape the social reality in the Malaysian society.

In this chapter, the researcher will also discuss on how the Patriarchal society in Malaysia influence the discursive practice of advertising and text consumption.

4.2 Frequency Count of Negative and Positive Words

A data frequency count was performed on 132 print advertisements. The data were also categorized according to the following categories:

(a) Body Parts that are given Special Focus

(b) Negative words that describe the body

(c) Positive words that describe the body

(d) Words with Positive Association

4.2.1 Body Parts That Are Given Special Focus

The following table displays words naming the body parts that are mentioned in the print advertisements. From the frequency count, the body parts that are given prominence are “thighs” (38 counts), “waist” (30 counts), “hips” (27 counts), “arms” (25 counts) and “tummy” (20 counts).

Table 1

Lexical Items	**Count(s)**	**Rank**
Thighs	38	1
Waist / waistline	30	2
Hips	27	3
Arms	25	4
Tummy	20	5
Calves	8	6
Midriff	7	7
Buttocks	4	8
Legs	3	9
Abdomen	3	9
Lower body	2	10

4.2.2 Negative Words That Describe The Body

The following are negative words used by the print advertisements to describe the conditions of the non-ideal body shape. As one would expect, negative lexicalization is more predominant than positive lexicalization. This may be due to the fact that promotional discourse tends to place extra emphasis on the negative body

condition in order to draw the attention of the readers to the imperfections of the non-ideal body shape.

Table 2

Lexical Items	**Count(s)**	**Rank**
Fat, Fats	104	1
Cellulite	35	2
Fatty acids	21	3
Flabby	15	4
Fat cells	11	5
Overweight	11	5
Post-natal flabs	11	5
Bulges	11	5
Stubborn	10	6
Excess	7	7
Orange peel skin	6	8
Loose	6	8
Extra	6	8
Excessive	5	9
Saggy	4	10
Slackened	4	10
Unsightly	4	10
Fat deposits	4	10
Bulging	3	11
Huge	3	11
Too much	2	12
Obesity	2	12
Pear shaped	2	12
Invisible	2	12
Thick	2	12
Sagging	2	12
Unwanted	2	12
Stretch marks	2	12
Pot belly	1	13
Ugly	1	13
Dull-looking skin	1	13
Big-framed	1	13
Wide	1	13
Large	1	13
Fleshy	1	13
Additional	1	13

Table 2 shows the most frequent negative lexical items found in the data are “fat, fats”, which rank first with 104 counts. The word “cellulite” ranks second with 35 counts, followed by “fatty acids” (21 counts), “flabby” (15 counts), “fat cells” (11 counts), “overweight” (11 counts), “post-natal flabs” (11 counts), “bulges” (11 counts) and “stubborn” (10 counts).

The circumstances surrounding women with non-ideal body are also vividly depicted by words with negative connotations. Examples are shown below:

Table 3

Lexical Items	Count(s)	Rank
Problem	52	1
Challenge	9	2
Problematic	7	3
Worry, worries	5	4
Down	3	5
Shunned away	2	6
Hide	2	6
Dread	2	6
Troubled	1	7
Battling	1	7
Difficulty	1	7

The most common lexical items used by the print advertisements to describe the predicament faced by women with the non-ideal body image are “problem” (52 counts), “challenge” (9 counts) and “problematic” (7 counts).

4.2.3 Positive Words That Describe The Body

The following are words that are used to describe the characteristics of the ideal body.

Table 4

Lexical Items	Count(s)	Rank
Slim, slimmer	88	1
Contoured	63	2
Curve, curvier	29	3
Right curve	14	4
Elasticity	11	5
Shapely, shapelier	10	6
Firm, firmer	10	6
Trim, trimmer	6	7
Tighter	6	7
Supple, suppleness	6	7
Svelte	4	8
Lighter	4	8
Smooth	4	8
Curvaceous	3	9
Taut	3	9
Sleek, sleeker	2	10
Slender	2	10

As displayed in Table 4 the word count shows that the words “slim, slimmer” ranked number one with 88 counts followed by “contoured’ (63 counts), “curve, curvier” (29 counts) and “right curve” (14 counts) as the criteria that constitute the ideal body image.

Similarly, the following are words that are used by the print advertisements to describe female body shapes that meet the prescribed requirement i.e. *slim*, *contoured* and *firm*. As shown in Table 5 the word with the highest frequency count is “great” (17 counts) followed by “ideal” (15 counts), “desired” (15 counts), “perfect” (13 counts), “good” (13 counts) and “fabulous” (10 counts).

Table 5

Lexical Items	**Count(s)**	**Rank**
Great	17	1
Ideal	15	2
Desired	15	2
Perfect	13	3
Good	13	3
Fabulous	10	4
Gorgeous	5	5
Eye-catching	4	6
Womanly	3	7
Glamorous	3	7
Stunning	3	7
Charming	2	8
Picture-perfect	1	9
Alluring	1	9
Appealing	1	9
Elegance	1	9
Attractive	1	9
Graceful	1	9
Terrific	1	9

4.2.4 Words With Positive Association

From the analysis of 132 print advertisements, the following positive associations were derived. The print advertisements have drawn positive association between the ideal body image and the positive qualities that are listed in the following table:

Table 6

Lexical Items	Theme	Count(s)	Rank
Beauty, beautiful, pretty, prettier, gorgeous, attractive, stunning, glamorous	Beauty	72	1
Confident, confidence, confidently, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-assured	Confidence	65	2
Health, healthy, healthily	Health	62	3
Success, successful, succeed	Success	47	4
Achievement, achieve, achieved, achieving	Achievement	40	5
Flaunt, flaunting, show off, unveil, reveal, envy, enviable	Pride	32	6
New, newfound	New	29	7
Dream	Dream	21	8
Desire, desired	Desire	19	9
Glad, happier, celebrate, celebrating, celebration	Happiness	18	10
Sexy, sexier, seductive	Sexy	15	11
Young, younger, youthful	Youth	8	12
Freedom, independence	Freedom	4	13
Hope	Hope	3	14

The ideal body image is associated with various themes such as “beauty” (72 counts), “confidence” (65 counts), “health” (62 counts), “success” (47 counts), “achievement” (40 counts), “pride” (32 counts), “new” (29 counts), “dream” (21 counts), “desire” (19 counts), “happiness” (18 counts) and “sexy” (15 counts).

4.3 Words Used To Describe The Female Body

In the following analysis, selected excerpts from the print advertisements will be examined in order to see the kind of words used by the writers for the purpose of promoting the product advertised. By analyzing the adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns in the data, this study will be able to reveal what constitutes the non-ideal and the ideal body image for women and the ideological meaning that they carry.

4.3.1 Words that Describe the Non-Ideal Female Body

Negative lexicalization and negative labeling are the two main strategies employed by the advertisers to construct the non-ideal female form.

4.3.1.1 Negative Lexicalization and the Non-Idealized Body Image for Women

Negative lexicalization is a strategy employed by the promotional texts to present an idea or notion in an unfavourable light. In the analysis of the promotional texts, the researcher managed to identify many instances where the advertisers utilized the strategy of negative lexicalization to bring to light the 'flaws' in a woman's body that is considered as the non-ideal body shape. They also use negative lexicalization to construct certain qualities as unacceptable and undesirable.

According to Grogan (1999), in the Western society the ideal body for women is slim. Therefore, those who do not conform to the slender ideal (i.e. overweight people) will be deemed as physically unattractive and being associated with many negative characteristics. She points out that within the Western ideology, being overweight is considered as violating the cultural ideal of self denial and self control. Therefore, such ideology resulted in prejudice against those who do not meet the requirement of the slender cultural ideal.

Extract 1 is obtained from the promotional texts.

Extract 1

Exclusively for women with overweight problems.

(L7 The Star 11 February 2006)

List of examples

Overweight

overweight women

simply overweight

In this extract the adjective "*overweight*" was chosen to describe women who do not belong to the slim category. The adjective *overweight* is negative because it denotes that a woman is in a state that is considered as 'too heavy and fat' because she exceeds the normal weight range. The phrase *simply overweight* which is made up of an adverb and an adjective is meant to intensify the word *overweight*. The word *overweight* is therefore being intensified to mean '*simply* too heavy and fat'.

There are many words that can be used to describe a large woman in a positive way. Some of the words are well endowed, chubby and voluptuous. However, the promotional texts did not choose any of these words because their intention is to highlight that a woman who is large does not fall under the 'ideal body' category. Jaya Ranee (2002) in her study on "Stereotypes in the Language of Beauty Products Advertisement" asserts that negative connotative adjectives are used by the advertisers to make the potential customer aware of the 'problem' that a woman may be facing so that she would want to take remedial action to rectify the 'problem'. She points out that these adjectives refer to a particular condition of the body that is perceived as undesirable and they function to create discontentment among the potential customers.

Another group of adjectives that are negatively lexicalized is shown in Extract 2.

Extract 2

Managing your weight can be one of the most difficult tasks when trying to lose those extra pounds.

(L6 The Star 8 Feb 2006)

Your attempts at weight loss could be the reason why you're gaining weight. Sound ironic? Not at all. Giving in to notions that skipping meals can help you lose the excessive weight fast can backfire on you.

(L5 The Star 8 June 2006)

Micro-massage mobilizes the fat cells for increase oxygenation to reduce excess fat and detoxification.

(SS3 The Star 4 May 2006)

Some of us have too much weight, some too much fat at the wrong places… or it could be cellulite and stretchmarks …or probably flabby muscle tone.

(E12 The Star 3 Dec 2006)

List of examples

Adjectives

Extra inches, Extra pounds

Excess fat, Excess weight

Excessive fats

Additional weight

Adverbs

Too much weight, Too much fat

The adjectives *extra, excess, excessive* and *additional* are used in phrases such as *extra inches, extra pounds, excess fat, excess weight, excessive fats* and *additional weight*. The adjectives *extra, excess, excessive* and *additional* convey the message that the body measurements, body weight, body fats is more than what is necessary or more than the acceptable standard or the norm. Similarly, the adverb *too much* is found in phrases such as *too much weight* and *too much fat*. The adverb *too*

much is used to describe the fat and weight in a woman's body that is more than the reasonable quantity or beyond the required value. Therefore, the promotional texts convey the message that when a woman has extra weight or excess fat in her body, her body is not in the ideal or perfect state.

The following adjectives shown in Extract 3 are derived from the promotional texts.

> Extract 3
>
> *Cenosis'* team of slimming specialist can deliver the maximum & excellent slimming results! "Thick waist, flabby arms, huge thighs are gone in just 90 days!" Eka Chan
>
> (C7 The Star 15 May 2006)
>
> With *Marie France Bodyline's* Proven Spot Reduction Programme, you can now tackle a pear-shaped figure the fast and easy way.
>
> (MF10 The Star 7 June 2006)
>
> List of examples
>
> Wide hips
>
> Huge thighs
>
> Large
>
> Big-framed
>
> Thick waist
>
> Fleshy thighs
>
> Bulging tummy
>
> Invisible waistline
>
> Pear-shaped

The adjectives are specially chosen to describe the size and appearance of the various body parts of a woman. The negatively lexicalized adjectives are carefully chosen by the advertisers in order to magnify the flaws in a woman's body. The adjective *wide* is normally used to describe the size of a geographical area such as a street or a river. However, in this case it is used to describe the women's body parts i.e. *wide hips* to emphasize that they are very big in size. Similarly, *huge*, *large* and *big* are

used to describe the different body parts of a woman such as *huge thighs*, *large* and *big-framed*. *Thick* is usually used to describe an object such as a wall. However, in the example extracted from the promotional text, *thick* is used to describe a *thick waist* in order to amplify the measurement of the waist that is larger than the ideal size. Likewise, *fleshy*, *bulging* and *invisible* are being chosen by the promotional text to describe the various body parts of a woman such as the *thighs*, *tummy* and *waistline* to emphasize that they are in a non-ideal state. *Pear-shaped* is another adjective used by the advertiser to describe a woman who is larger around her waist and hips than around the top part of her body. The adjective *pear-shaped* is considered as a negative lexis because it is the opposite of the description of an ideal body shape i.e. the hour-glass shape. Therefore, by using negatively lexicalized adjectives, the print advertisements have the power to construct and highlight the non-ideal body image for women in Malaysia.

Extract 4 contains a group of adjectives used by the promotional texts to illustrate the body conditions of women who are deemed to be in the non-ideal state.

> Extract 4
> Intensive Firming
> Target <u>loose</u>, <u>slackened</u> skin by firming muscle from deep within, giving an overall taut appearance.
>
> (MF8 The Star 26 June 2006)
>
> <u>List of examples</u>
> <u>*Adjectives*</u>
> Loose
> Loose, flabby skin
> Flabby arms, Flabby thighs, Flabby muscle, Flabby muscle tone
> Flabby skin, Flabby areas
> Saggy skin, Saggy areas
>
> <u>*Verbs*</u>
> Slackened area
> Sagging skin

The negatively lexicalized adjectives such as *loose, flabby* and *saggy* are employed to depict a woman's non-ideal body conditions that range from *loose, flabby skin, flabby arms, flabby thighs, flabby muscle, flabby muscle tone, flabby areas, saggy skin* to *saggy areas.* These adjectives are used to emphasize that the various body parts have lost its firmness or tightness and therefore is not in its ideal state. Similarly, the verbs *slackened* and *sagging* are also negatively lexicalized to describe the body parts that are not firm or tight i.e. *slackened area* and *sagging skin* to reflect the non-ideal state of the various body parts.

In Extract 5 below, body parts that contained more fat deposits are described using the adverb *unsightly* while body fats is described using the adjective *ugly*.

> Extract 5
>
> Ever since her wedding day, Earrin's weight had been on the increase due to her unhealthy eating habit. The greasy food she loved before bedtime resulted in <u>unsightly flabby</u> arms, wide hips and huge thighs.
>
> (MF20 The Star 15 Jan 2007)
>
> "I have enjoyed my experience with *Bizzy Body*. They have taught me how to look really fabulous and got rid of all the stubborn and <u>ugly</u> fats…"
>
> (BB1 the Star 20 June 2006)
>
> <u>List of examples</u>

Adverbs	*Adjective*	*Adverb + Adjective*
<u>Unsightly</u> flab	<u>Ugly</u> fats	<u>Unsightly flabby</u> arms
<u>Unsightly</u> bulges		

Unsightly and *ugly* are words that are negatively lexicalized because they carry the meaning that something is unattractive, not pleasing to the eyes or unpleasant to look at. In this case, the promotional texts are emphasizing that *flab* and *bulges* in a woman's body is unpleasant to look at. The phrase <u>*unsightly flabby*</u> *arms* is made up of '1 adverb + 1 adjective'. The adjective *flabby* is further intensified by the adverb

unsightly to describe the degree of ugliness of the fat arms. The use of negative lexicalization with high intensity signifies the ideology of the promotional text that 'fat' is something that does not have any aesthetic value.

The following extract (Extract 6) is another example where the promotional text employs negatively lexicalized adjectives such as *stubborn* and *unwanted* to describe various body parts with the accumulation of fats i.e. *stubborn bulge, stubborn spots, stubborn fats, unwanted fat* and *unwanted inches*. The adjective s*tubborn* implies that the fats are difficult to eliminate while *unwanted* suggest that the fats are undesirable and not required. Therefore, from this analysis, the promotional texts bring to our attention that body fat is something that is bad and negative.

Extract 6

During each session, we'll focus on problem areas like arms, tummy and thighs to ensure the stubborn fats are being broken down.

(SS2 The Star 16 February 2006)

With new R.F.Thermal Slim, you can be sure of losing unwanted inches effectively.

(PW3 The Star 31 July 2006)

List of examples

Stubborn bulge

Stubborn spots, Stubborn fats

Unwanted fat, Unwanted inches

In the promotional text as shown in Extract 7, considerable attention has been given to post-natal weight issues faced by new mothers.

Extract 7

"I was thrilled when I had my baby daughter eight years ago – but not with my post-natal flab and orange peel skin. I felt awful."

(MF11 The Star 8 May 2006)

With *Marie France Bodyline*, you can fight post-natal fats easily!

(MF12 The Star 13 February 2006)

List of examples

Post-natal weight gain

Post-natal weight problem

Post natal flab

Post-natal fats

The adjective *post-natal* is being used to describe situation encountered by women who have just given birth such as *post-natal weight gain*, *post-natal weight problem*, *post-natal flab* and *post-natal fats.* In the promotional text, the voice of a mother was incorporated. The voice recalled her post-natal struggle as a new mother some eight years ago and described her experience using a negatively lexicalized adjective i.e. *awful*. By using this negative adjective, the promotional texts accentuate that post-natal weight gain is a dreadful experience.

Extract 8

With *Esthetika*, you can groom yourself towards your ideal figure and feel good without the bulges.

(E6 The Star 26 June 2006)

Combat festive bulges with our 1-week free Slimming Programme

(E10 The Star 21 November 2006)

So, shave off those 'mommy bulges' and reward yourself with the ultimate slimming experience like no other.

(E7 The Star 6 September 2006)

Extract 8 (continued)

Say goodbye to flab! (MF8 the Star 26 June 2006)

Pure fossil mud is applied to the skin to remove impurities and other waste products, ironing out the orange peel appearance of cellulite; leaving skin feeling smooth and taut.

(MF14 The Star 13 November 2006)

List of examples

Flabs

Bulges, mommy bulges

Fat deposits

cellulite

Orange peel appearance of cellulite

Stretch marks

Pot belly

Orange-peel skin

Dull-looking skin

In Extract 8 the advertisers use negatively lexicalized nouns such as *flabs, bulges, mommy bulges, fat deposits, cellulite, stretch marks* and *pot belly* to emphasize the imperfect conditions of the female body as a result of pregnancy. Note that the coined phrase *mommy bulges* is used to describe the post-natal fat deposit at the abdomen area experienced by most mothers. The noun *mommy* (i.e. an informal and affectionate use for calling one's mother) which precedes the word *bulges* further intensifies the word *bulges*. It also draws the attention of the readers to associate bulging abdomen as an undesirable by-product after a woman becomes a mother. Similarly, the phrase *pot belly* also has the similar connotation as *mommy bulges*. The noun *pot* which precedes *belly* is used to describe the shape of the *belly* (i.e. abdomen) that looks like a *pot* i.e. round shaped.

Besides nouns, the texts also use adjectives such as *orange peel skin* and *dull-looking skin* to further accentuate the imperfect skin appearance of mothers. Naturally, a woman will gain some weight and experience some changes in her body after going through child birth. In order to market the slimming programmes, the advertisers suggest that a woman are expected to maintain her pre-pregnancy figure even after she has given birth. This ideology may appear unreasonable but it has become a popular belief among mothers of this generation. Many of the mothers today strive very hard to maintain the ideal body image.

When specific body parts of a woman have more accumulation of fat cells, the text described the body parts as *problem zones, problem areas and problematic areas* as displayed in Extract 9.

> Extract 9
>
> Here at *London Weight Management*, our professional experts are trained to target your problem areas, giving you tips on how you can turn your flab into a fabulous body.
>
> (L6 The Star 8 Feb 2006)
>
> To zoom in on those stubborn spots, advanced electro-waves and intensity levels are customized to help eliminate problem zones.
>
> (MF8 The Star 26 June 2006)
>
> 1 Free full-body weight management session - Exclusively for women with overweight problems.
>
> (L1 The Star 23 December 2005)
>
> Need a solution to your weight problems? (L3 The Star 8 May 2006)
>
> Introducing *Mayfair's* Chilispot Focus Trimming Program. Targeting at specific problematic spots, it is an advanced program developed from Nano Technology that uses highly concentrated CLA gel to trim, slim and tone your body shape for the curve that is stunningly eye-catching.
>
> (MFR6 The Star 28 October 2005)

Extract 9 (continued)

List of examples

Adjectives	*Adjective + Adjective*	*Noun*
Problem zones	Specific problematic spots	overall weight problem
Problem areas		overweight problems
Problematic areas		never-ending fat problem
		Worry
		weight worries

Both the adjectives *problem* and *problematic* are negative words because they denote something that is difficult to deal with. The text also conveys higher intensity by using two adjectives consecutively i.e. *specific problematic spots* to highlight the seriousness of the problematic spots. Therefore, the promotional text capitalized on negative lexicalization to sell the ideology that body fats is something that is bad and negative.

The word *problem* can also exist as a noun as in *overall weight problem, overweight problems* and *never-ending fat problem*. In the promotional text, being fat or overweight is equated with facing a problem that troubles women. Women who are on the heavier side are deemed to face weight problem. When used as a noun, the word *problem* denotes that something is not at its correct state and requires a solution. Without a doubt, the solution that is being promoted by the text is seeking professional help to achieve the ideal body shape.

Worry or *weight worries* are negative nouns used to describe the state women are in when they do not have the ideal body shapes. When the promotional texts use the noun *worry* to describe the condition of women with the non-ideal body shapes, they are assuming that women who are on the heavier side of the scale are overwhelmed by anxiety and do not have peace of mind. This notion is also ideological.

Extract 10

"I've been battling with my weight problems since adolescence, and it was a challenge for my modeling career and self-confidence." Andrea Fonseka, Miss Malaysia/Universe 2004

(MF22 The Star 18 January 2007)

"I put on weight as easily as sponge and losing weight has been my biggest challenge." Peggy Lai, Malaysian singer

(T1 The Star 8 May 2006)

"After the birth of my fourth child, my body kept piling on pounds and I had difficulty shedding them." Faridah Binti Yang Razali, Age 43

(MF12 The Star 13 February 2006)

In Extract 10, we see the voices of two celebrities namely, Andrea Fonseka, who was crowned the Miss Malaysia/Universe 2004 and Peggy Lai, a Malaysian singer. Andrea described her experience by using the verb *battling* to signify that it was not easy to deal with her weight issue since adolescence. The verb *battling* indicates that she had to fight and struggle a lot with her weight issue. The noun *challenge* was being employed by both women to describe their experiences dealing with weight issues. Peggy Lai describes losing weight as her *biggest challenge*. The adjective *biggest* preceding the noun *challenge* creates a higher intensity for the noun, thus adding more force to the noun *challenge*. In this context, the word *challenge* is a negative lexis as it means trial or test that prevents both women from advancing in their respective careers.

Another client of *Marie France Bodyline* by the name of Faridah recalled her struggle with her increasing body weight after the birth of her fourth child. She uses the noun *difficulty* to describe her attempt to reduce her body weight. In this extract, the advertiser incorporated the negative lexicalized noun *difficulty* to paint the picture that attempts by women to lose weight without their professional help is indeed a Herculean task.

The promotional texts (Extract 11) below capitalize on the adverb *down* to narrate how women felt when they have flabs, bulges and cellulite in their bodies.

Extract 11

Ladies, if flabs, bulges and cellulite are weighing you down, this is the month to act!

(E1 The Star 24 May 2006)

Unsightly flab getting you down? Turn to *Marie France Bodyline*.

(MF2 The Star 22 May 2006)

"Only *Cenosis* can help me to reduce the baby fats that troubled me for 8 years, and provide me with long-lasting slimming results" Crystal Ong

(C16 The Star 2 October 2006)

The adverb *down* is often used to express the feelings of hopelessness and sadness. The verb *troubled* as appeared in the phrase '…the baby fats that *troubled* me for 8 years,…' send the message to the readers that body fat can disturb the well being of a person if it is not dealt with appropriately. Both the notions are ideological because they described body fats as bad elements that can make a woman feel inadequate.

Extract 12 consists of voices of women who recalled their past experience before they slimmed down to their ideal body shapes.

Extract 12

"I shunned away from people." (L9 The Sun 4 September 2006)

"Fortunately for me, the weight management experts were able to resolve my weight problem. I don't feel the need to hide anymore."

(L10 The Star 6 February 2007)

"Like most women, I have always relied on clothes to hide my problem areas." Fish Leong (C15 The Star 18 September 2006)

"I don't dread looking in the mirror or weighing myself anymore."

(BP2 The Star 9 August 2006)

The testimonies are obtained from the promotional texts examined. The verbs that these women used to describe their situation are negatively lexicalized such as '*shunned* away from people', '*hide* my problem areas' and '*dread* looking in the mirror'. These verbs reflect their feeling of insecurity and lack of self-confidence during the time when they do not possess the ideal body shapes. By inserting these voices in the promotional texts, the advertisers are sending the message to the readers and potential customers that if they do not have the ideal body image, they will be inadequate and find it difficult to face the world.

4.3.1.2 Negative Labeling

According to Cash (1990 in Grogan, 1999), people who do not belong to the slender category are being prejudiced throughout their lives beginning from childhood. According to him, children avoid playing with their overweight peers and described overweight people with negative adjectives. He stresses that this prejudice remains until adulthood when overweight people are often considered as less intelligent, less successful and less popular than slim people.

In this study, negative lexicalization can be identified from the nouns that are used to depict women who have bigger body size. In the following excerpt taken from *London Weight Management's* promotional text (Extract 13), the client of the slimming centre shared her past experience when she was fat. The client recalled her experience when she was given nicknames such as *water buffalo* and *big truck* when she weighed 112.5kg. *Water buffalo* is a large animal that can be found in the paddy fields in the tropical countries while a *truck* is a heavy duty vehicle that is used for transporting goods. In the phrase *big truck*, note that the adjective *big* precedes the noun *truck*,

therefore, the adjective acts to intensify the noun *truck* thus making the negative labeling more obvious.

> Extract 13
> "I couldn't do anything about my ballooning weight. I shunned away from people. My nicknames were 'water buffalo' and 'big truck'…"
> (L9 The Sun 4 September 2006)

In another excerpt by the same slimming centre (Extract 14), the client described herself as looking like a *King Kong*, a large ape-like character in a movie produced in Hollywood. The reason that this woman labeled herself as *King Kong* is because she had gained weight continuously after giving birth to a child. Being large has become a social stigma in the Malaysian society to the extent that women labeled themselves negatively. The voice in this example mentioned that she '*practically* looked like *King Kong*!'. The adverb *practically* which is used before the noun *King Kong* adds intensity to the noun thus creating greater impact for the negative labeling.

> Extract 14
> "After giving birth, I knew that my weight had gone beyond control. I had to wear large-size clothing. I practically looked like King Kong! …"
> (L10 The Star 6 February 2007)

Jamie Ang, a client of *Terimee Beauty Slimming Academy* (Extract 15) recalled her past experience when she was nicknamed as a *tanker* during the time when she was large. She explains that after becoming slim, no one calls her a *tanker* anymore.

> Extract 15
> "I participated in various slimming programmes before but the results were just unsatisfactory. Now that I've chosen *Terimee*, no one calls me a tanker anymore." Jamie Ang
> (T5 The Star 19 December 2005)

Water buffalo and *King Kong* are both large creatures. Likewise, *big truck* and *tanker* share a similar characteristic of being a huge vehicle. As seen from the examples in the various excerpts from the promotional texts, negative lexicalization was employed by the society to label women who do not conform to the idealized body image as large creatures or objects. The negative labeling is indeed degrading women who are physically large. The labeling can also create emotional distress to the affected women and damage their self confidence.

The next example of negative labeling is obtained from the print advertisement published by *Mayfair Bodyline* during Mother's Day. As seen in Extract 16, the promotional text employs the noun *Auntie Fatty* to label a woman who is fat. *Auntie* is the colloquial or informal use by the Malaysian society to address a woman who is more senior that the speaker. *Auntie* can be equated to *madam*. *Auntie Fatty* is a negative labeling because firstly, calling someone as *Fatty* is considered impolite and socially unacceptable. Secondly, by calling a woman *Auntie Fatty* just because she is physically bigger is even more unacceptable because it is not respectful.

> Extract 16
>
> Being a mother is great, but that doesn't mean you have to sacrifice your beauty and self-confidence. Surely you don't want to be called "Auntie Fatty"
>
> (MFR1 The Star 22 May 2006)

4.3.2 Words that Describe the Ideal Female Body

The analysis demonstrates that the advertisers rely heavily on positive lexicalization to construct the ideal female form. Besides using positive lexicalization, the promotional texts also used positive association to attach certain qualities and values to the ideal female form.

4.3.2.1 Positive Lexicalization and the Idealized Body Image for Women

Lexicalization plays an important role in the construction of the ideal body image for women. Positive lexicalization draws the attention of the readers to the positive aspects of whatever that is being described.

The analysis of the data reveals that the ideal body image for women constructed by the print advertisement is that of a slim body. By examining the extract below, we will be able to see how the ideal female form is represented through the adjectives chosen in the promotional texts.

> Extract 17
> Dream Body Sculpting Programme has been developed by our slimming experts to give you what you've always wanted. A slim, slender and sexier body you can call your own. Find out how you can achieve the right curves with Dream Body Sculpting Programme.
> (SS3 The Star 4 May 2006)
>
> To remain slim and body beautiful, target those hard-to-tone body fat areas with our new Dynamic Sculpt Programme. … Call *Marie France Bodyline* today and be on your way to a slimmer, sexier you!
> (MF8 The Star 26 June 2006)
>
> Today I am a confident woman with a sensuous, svelte body. It can happen to you too! (MF 22 The Star 18 January 2007)

Extract 17 (continued)

List of examples

Slim, Slim hips

Slimmer

Slender

A slim, slender and sexier body

Svelte, Svelte bod, Svelte body, Svelte figure

Trim, Trim body

Trimmer

The words shown in Extract 17 are used to describe the ideal female body. They consist of adjectives such as *slim, slimmer, slender, svelte, trim* and *trimmer*. The use of positively lexicalized adjectives clearly demonstrates that the ideal female body shape endorsed by the advertisers is that of *slim, slender, svelte* and *trim*. They are all synonyms and they carry the message that the advertisers want to convey, that is only by having a slim figure, a woman is considered as having the ideal body image.

Apart from being slim, the ideal female body must also be shapely. This requirement can be observed by the adjectives that appeared in the promotional texts (Extract 18) such as *shapely, shapelier, curvaceous* and *contoured*.

Extract 18

"Apart from word of mouth and its clients' success stories, *Skin Culture & Slim World's* programs have proven to me they can fulfill my dreams of having a curvaceous figure and confidence."

(SW2 The Star 22 February 2006)

Tailored to your specific needs, this programme helps you achieve slim hips, toned legs and a shapely lower body.

(MF10 The Star 7 June 2006)

Marie France Bodyline has since fulfilled all my slimming needs. Sleeker silhouette. Shapelier contours. I now have the body I've always wanted. (MF 22 The Star 18 January 2007)

Extract 18 (continued)

List of examples

Shapely, Shapely legs, Shapely figure

Shapelier body, Shapelier figure, Shapelier contours

A curvaceous figure, A curvaceous appearance

Slim and contoured figure

Contoured figure

All the adjectives in Extract 18 emphasize that the ideal female body must be shapely and well-contoured. The adjectives *shapely*, *shapelier*, *curvaceous* and *contoured* are used to describe the body parts (i.e. shapely legs) and the whole body in general to emphasize that the ideal female body must be shapely, contoured and curvaceous. By employing the adjectives that are positively lexicalized, the advertisers are imposing a benchmark for a female body to be considered as ideal. Without having the qualities described by the adjectives such as *shapely* and *curvaceous*, a woman will be classified by the promotional texts as having the non-ideal body image. Again, this is another requirement of an ideal body image constructed by the print advertisements.

Jaya Ranee (2002) claims that among the positive collocates that was identified from the slimming advertisements that she examines are words such as *curves*, *shape*, *contours* and *contouring*. She classifies these words as positive connotative words. According to Jaya Ranee (2002), positive connotative words are "words that are commendatory and highlight the desirable results that the products or services can bring'.

Extract 19 is another group of adjectives used to describe the ideal female form.

> Extract 19
> Medium frequencies are used to stimulate your muscle, accelerate your metabolism rate and reduce fat deposits, leaving you with a slender, tighter and firmer body.
> Loose and slackened areas are reshaped and retraced for lighter and firmer results. (SS3 The Star 4 May 2006)
>
> At *Mayfair*, we'll help you regain your sleek and slim bodyline, and the result that lasts long! (MFR1 The Star 22 May 2006)
>
> List of examples
> Firm
> Taut
> Lighter and firmer bodies
> A slender, tighter and firmer body
> Smooth and supple
> Sleeker silhouette
> Sleek and slim bodyline

The adjectives employed in Extract 19 suggest that women who are slim and shapely must also have bodies that are firm, tight and smooth as shown by the use of positively lexicalized adjectives such as *firm, firmer, taut, tighter, lighter, smooth, supple, sleek* and *sleeker* to describe the ideal female body form.

If we examine the minimum requirement imposed by the advertiser, we note that in order for a woman to fall under the ideal body category, she must first of all possess a *slim* figure, secondly, her slim figure must also be *shapely* and lastly, her body must be *firm* and *smooth*. According to the advertisements, only by having all these three criteria, a woman will be regarded as having the ideal body image. These criteria are actually imposed by the promotional texts analyzed. However, the readers may not realize the imposition. At the same time, the readers may not know that the advertisers

are actually constructing the reality concerning the notion of an ideal body image for women in the Malaysian society.

Extract 20

"My body has been sculpted and contoured by *Cenosis* to an ideal womanly figure." (C10 The Star 13 November 2006)

For ladies who work hard, play hard and live large, the new *Perfect Therapy 60 (PT60)* helps you achieve and maintain your ideal figure in all of 60 minutes. (MF1 The Star 15 March 2006)

Call now and you are one step towards achieving that perfect figure. (E8 The Star 2 Oct 2006)

The perfect body for just RM2288. (MF7 The Star 7 August 2006)

List of examples

Ideal figure

Perfect figure

Perfect body

Perfect curve

Adjectives such as *ideal* and *perfect* are often used to describe the female body shapes that are slim, shapely and firm. Extract 20 contains examples of adjectives found in the texts. The word *ideal* means perfect or most suitable while the word *perfect* means complete and without flaws. The use of the adjectives *ideal* and *perfect* convey the message to the readers of the advertisements that a woman with a slim, shapely and firm figure is considered as having the ideal and perfect body shape. Moreover, the advertiser uses the phrase 'an ideal womanly figure' to describe the figure of a woman that is being sculpted and contoured. The implication here is that a woman who does not conform to the prescribed body description falls into the category of the non-ideal because she does not have a figure considered as 'womanly'. Therefore, these adjectives carry subtle ideological meanings that are opaque to the readers in general.

Extract 21 contains examples of adjectives used in the promotional texts to illustrate the ideal female body shapes.

> Extract 21
>
> A great figure commands attention wherever you go. If you want a slim, firm figure that's set to turn heads… you will love what *Esthetika* can for you. (E5 The Star 15 February 2006)
>
> Absolute confidence with a picture-perfect body.
> (MFR9 The Star 21 December 2005)
>
> Our proof that you too can be stunning!
> (BP3 The Star 20 February 2006)
>
> Look fabulous and feel great. (PW1 The Star 14 February 2006)
>
> List of examples
> Great figure, Great shape, Great abs
> Fabulous figure
> Stunning figure
> A picture-perfect body
> Alluring and appealing bodyline

A woman who possesses a slim and shapely figure is described as having a *great* figure, *great* shape and *great* abs. Besides the adjective *great*, the advertisers also described a slim figure using adjectives such as *fabulous, stunning, picture-perfect, alluring* and *appealing*. These adjectives are positively lexicalized to convey the message that having a slim figure is very attractive, highly esteemed and appealing to the eyes of the beholder. Here, the advertisers are associating positive adjectives such as *great, fabulous, stunning, alluring* and *appealing* to the female body shapes that are slim, shapely and firm. Therefore, the advertisers are encouraging women to pursue the ideal body shape as it is painted as something positive and good. We can also see how the ideological work of the advertisements is being instilled into the minds of women in particular and the Malaysian society in general. The print advertisements not only

construct how an ideal female body should look like, but also instill the idea that having an ideal body image is good because it makes a woman looks attractive and great.

4.3.2.2 Positive Association

Bordo (1993) states that in the Western culture, a slim body is being associated with a certain set of positive cultural values. Brownmiller (1984) in her studies on women shows that slenderness is directly associated with 'refinement', 'will power' and 'sophisticated elegance'. Similarly, Grogan (1999) explains that in the Western society, slenderness is often given positive association such as happiness, success, youthfulness and social acceptability. On the other hand, being overweight is associated with laziness, lack of will power and control.

Wendy Chapkis (1986) strongly believes that women are tormented and pressured by a 'global culture machine' that promotes the ideal beauty based on Western standard to women in the whole world. The 'global culture machine' that she refers to is none other than the advertising industry, communication media and the cosmetic industry.

Due to globalization, the message in the print advertisements in this study also associates slenderness with the positive cultural values that are highly esteemed in the Western society.

4.3.2.2.1 Self-Esteem and the Ideal Body Image

Sloan (2007) defines self-esteem as "an individual's perceived feelings of value and self-worth". According to her, an individual who possesses high self-esteem has high self-worth and a positive self-image. She claims that the way a person views his or her body has a direct impact towards his or her self-esteem.

Self-esteem is an important element that helps a person to have a positive outlook in life and thus making oneself confident to face the challenging world. Therefore, the promotional texts draw on this perspective to associate self-esteem with having an ideal body image. This is another ideological work that is taking place. Extracts 22 and 23 are examples of how the texts associate self-esteem with having a slim body image.

> Extract 22
>
> It's great to slim down positively and to feel good about yourself all over again! This month, start feeling <u>more confident</u> with your new looks, like Emily and Kai Shi who have made the right decision that changed their lives for the better. So, stop feeling self-conscious about your figure and reward yourself with *Esthetika's* ultimate slimming experience that will give you REAL results!
>
> (E9 The Star 25 September 2006)

Extract 22 is extracted from an advertisement published by *Esthetika Slimming Beauty Centre*. In the text, the advertiser claims that by having a new look i.e. a slim figure, one will be *more confident* (adjective +adjective). The adjective *more* that precedes the adjective *confident* intensifies the word *confidence*, thus creating greater impact.

> Extract 23
>
> **Absolute <u>Confidence</u> with a picture-perfect body.** (Headline)
>
> Stay stunningly attractive and <u>absolutely confident</u> with whatever outfit you put on. (MFR9 The Star 21 December 2005)

In Extract 23, the headline of *Mayfair Bodyline's* advertisement reads as: 'Absolute confidence with a picture-perfect body'. The text uses the word *confidence* (noun) to describe a woman who has a beautiful body that is 'picture-perfect'. The adjective *absolute* which precedes the noun *confidence* adds intensity to the noun. As a result, the noun *confidence* is brought into focus. In this case, the advertiser is claiming that a woman will be totally confident when she has a slim and perfect figure. Furthermore, the text of the same extract claims that a woman will be 'absolutely confident' no matter what clothing they put on when they have a slim body. Note that the intensity of the adjective *confident* is further enhanced by inserting an adverb *absolutely* in front of the adjective.

> Extract 24
> Headline of Expressions' advertisement: A smaller dress-size and a bigger <u>confidence</u> in just 2 weeks!
>
> (EXP1 The Star 21 February 2006)

> Extract 25
> (Slogan of *Slimming Sanctuary's* advertisement):
> 'The shape of <u>confidence'</u>
>
> (SS3 The Star 4 May 2006)

> Extract 26
> **A Star is Born At *Mayfair***
> <u>Confidence</u> and <u>self-esteem</u> are the hallmarks of a slim, beautiful woman, and at *Mayfair*, we believe we can help a woman achieve those qualities.
>
> (MFR10 The Star 13 February 2006)

Similarly, in Extract 24, we see another headline that says: 'A smaller dress-size and a bigger *confidence* in just 2 weeks'. Extract 25 is a slogan extracted from *Slimming Sanctuary's* advertisement. The slogan reads as: 'The shape of confidence'. This slogan implies that having the ideal body shape is a criterion for self-confidence. In Extract 26, the advertiser claims that a woman who is slim and beautiful possesses

confidence (noun) and *self-esteem* (noun). In the same paragraph, the advertisers also claim that they can assist a woman to achieve such qualities.

These claims are ideological in nature and do not really reflect reality. This is because in real life, we have seen and come across many women who have the 'non-ideal' body shape but still have very high level of self-esteem and self-confidence. We also encounter many women who have the 'ideal' body shape as described in the advertisement but are lacking in self-confidence. Therefore, self-confidence and has no relation with having a slim body. This connection is drawn for the benefit of marketing the services offered by slimming centres.

The root cause for low self-esteem is actually the ideology of the mass media that equates a slim body with beauty. Thus, women with the non-ideal body shape will suffer from low self-esteem if they have a negative body image or judge themselves negatively as a result of their exposure to the ideology propagated by the mass media.

4.3.2.2.2 Beauty / Sex Appeal and the Ideal Body Image

Beauty and sex appeal are the qualities popularized by consumerism. Advertising industry has contributed to the propagation of the idea that beauty and sex appeal are positive qualities that men and women should possess. As a result, the society considers these qualities as something that have to be pursued and sought after in order not to be left behind.

Perutz (1970) points out that in America, there is an over-emphasis that slim women are sexually attractive women, while 'maternal type' women are condemned as unfeminine, shabby looking and unfashionable. According to her, social surrounding in

America such as advertisements, movies and shopping sprees are constantly reminding people that “fat is unlovely, unfashionable, unsexy and unsocial”. (Perutz 1970: 172)

Burns (2006) points out that in the contemporary Western society, a woman with a slender body type is regarded as a beautiful woman. The equation of beauty and a slender body sends the message to women and girls that if they want to be attractive, they have to be thin. On a similar note, Striegel-Moore and Franko (2002) state that having a thin body shape is a hallmark of contemporary beauty. According to them, beauty myth carries powerful impact on women simply because beauty is one of the major aspects of the female gender role stereotype. By becoming beautiful, a woman meets the social expectations regarding her femininity besides affirming her identity as a female. Striegel-Moore and Franko (2002) further explain that at a tender age, girls are already subjected to the societal expectations to work towards attaining beautiful figures. Over a period of time, they are likely to develop self-monitoring and self-improvement behaviours for the purpose of meeting the beauty standard set by their culture.

Extract 27 is a good example of how promotional texts draw connection between the ideal body image with beauty and sex appeal. It is extracted from an advertisement published by *Mayfair Bodyline*.

> Extract 27
>
> **Absolute Confidence with a picture-perfect body**
>
> Stay stunningly attractive and absolutely confident with whatever outfit you put on. *Mayfair* Chili CLA Slimming gives you the slim figure that places you at the focus of all attentions. For hot sexy contour that turns on the siren, call the chili slimming expert today.
>
> (MFR9 The Star 21 December 2005)

In the extract, the adverb *stunningly* is employed to intensify the adjective *attractive*. The phrase *stunningly attractive* is employed by the advertiser to communicate to the readers that a slim figure is indeed highly regarded as the object of beauty. A slim and curvaceous body is also described as a 'hot sexy contour' implying that a slim body is sexy and appealing.

Extract 28 is another example of how a promotional text describes the positive qualities associated with having a slim body.

> Extract 28
>
> **Yes! The Possibilities Of Looking <u>Gorgeous</u> Are Just Endless.**
>
> A slim body makes a woman feel <u>good</u> and look <u>great</u> the way she wants. It empowers her with self-confidence and <u>mesmerizing beauty</u>. Visit *Mayfair* today and bring out the real woman in you.
>
> (MRF4 The Star 27 December 2005)

Several adjectives used to describe the consequences of possessing a slim body are *gorgeous*, *good*, *great* and *mesmerizing*. The adjective *mesmerizing* is used to illustrate the word *beauty* (noun) thus further amplifies the positive quality of having a slim body.

In another example extracted from the promotional text (Extract 29), the advertiser uses the word *seduce* (verb) and *seductive* (adjective) to describe the result of having a slim body.

> Extract 29
>
> A time to woo … a time to <u>seduce</u> … a time to turn the heat on. Surprise your Valentine with a <u>gorgeous</u>, <u>seductive</u> body.
>
> (T3 The Star 20 February 2006))

This advertisement was published during the Valentine's Day season. The advertiser took the opportunity of the Valentine Day's celebration to associate sex

appeal with the ideal body image. According to the promotional text, Valentine's season is the time to 'Surprise your Valentine with a gorgeous, *seductive* body'. From this text, it shows that a woman with a slim body is described as having the quality of beauty and sex appeal.

4.3.2.2.3 Success / Achievement and the Ideal Body Image

Success and achievement are qualities that are esteemed by today's society that is very much caught up in the rat race. Therefore, the promotional texts often associate success and achievement with having an ideal body image.

Bordo (1993) states that at the end of the last century, people with excess flesh are usually considered as having low morality, lack of will power and physically inadequate. According to her, a person with a firm and toned body is considered as a symbol of success as having a slim body is being interpreted as being in control.

> Extract 30
> "… My programme with *Terimee* only started 2 months ago. I have never been this <u>successful</u> and I am ready to take on a new frontier with my new album." – Peggy Lai, Malaysian Singer and *Terimee* Client
> (T6 The Star 8 April 2006)

Extract 30 above is a testimony obtained from an advertisement published by *Terimee Beauty Slimming Academy*. Peggy Lai, a Malaysian singer who has lost 10kg as a result of joining the slimming programme, claims that she 'has never been this *successful* (adjective)'. Her claims seem to suggest that even a celebrity considers her success in becoming slimmer more awesome than her glamourous career as a singer.

Extract 31 is another example of a promotional text that illustrates losing weight i.e. having a slimmer body as an *achievement* (noun) that is *remarkable* (adjective).

> Extract 31
> "Dropping from XXL to M in just 2 months!"
> For these two Expressions clients, losing so much weight in only two months was a remarkable achievement.
> (EXP2 The Star 28 December 2005)

The adjective *remarkable* adds intensity to the noun *achievement* to emphasise that attaining a slim body is something that is noteworthy.

Likewise, Extract 32 also described restoring the body to its ideal figure as an *achievement* (noun) for every woman.

> Extract 32
> Contented, Confident and Curvaceous. We believe in *SlimWorld* to restore the figure and beauty is an achievement for every woman.
> (SW5 The Star 28 October 2005)

4.3.2.2.4 Health and the Ideal Body Image

From the analyses, many of the promotional texts associate ideal body image with health. According to Hesse-Biber et. al. (2006), the healthy lifestyle promoted by health clubs and fitness centres is a carefully camouflaged beauty quest and pressures. They point out that the various methods of healthy lifestyle carried out by women are more for beauty purposes rather than health.

Grogan (1999) states that there is a general belief that being plump is not healthy while being thin is a sign of good health. Braziel and LeBesco (2001) point out that because the contemporary beauty ideal is a body that is tight, lean and toned, fat is

considered as both unhealthy and unattractive. Therefore, fat people are being regarded as “agents of abhorrence and disgust”.

Extract 33 is the testimony of Miss Alice Wong who has lost 47kg after joining the slimming programme. She claims that she has ‘never felt healthier’ after attaining a slimmer body. In this case, the word *healthier* (adjective) was used to describe the result of her slimming programme.

> Extract 33
>
> “….I have never felt healthier or more confident. Thank you, *Body Perfect* for transforming my slimming desires into reality.” – Miss Alice Wong Pooi Fun.
>
> (BP2 The Star 9 August 2006)

Another example of promotional text with the similar notion is seen in Extract 34.

> Extract 34
>
> Not only will you learn to maintain your newly found figure, your health and confidence will be restored full circle!
>
> (L7 The Star 11 February 2006)

In this text, the advertiser claims that the client’s ‘*health* (noun) will be restored full circle’. In these two promotional texts, the readers’ attention is drawn to the connection between health and the ideal body image which implies that a woman who has a slim body is healthy. However, this is not necessary true because some women who restrict their food intake in order to maintain a slim figure suffer from malnutrition. Some of these women who are extreme in their food intake do suffer from Anorexia Nervosa.

4.3.2.2.5 Happiness and the Ideal Body Image

Marika Tiggemann and Esther Rothblum (1988 in Grogan, 1999) conducted a psychology study on a large group of American and Australian students. In this study, the students were required to rate eight qualities that were typical of thin men and women, and fat men and women. From the study, they found that in both culture, fat people were considered as less happy, less self-confident and less attractive than thin people. The results show that fat women were more negatively stereotyped compared to fat men.

According to Renzetti & Curran (1992 cited in Baltrusaityte, 2006), mass media promotes the idea that physical appearance is the determining factor of whether one is successful or happy.

> Extract 35
> "My weight is less than 63kg now and I have never been happier!" –
> Miss Eve Leong, a client of *Cenosis*. (C4 The Star 26 June 2006)

The promotional text constructs a woman who has lost weight and attained the ideal body image as someone who possesses happiness. In Extract 35, the client of this particular slimming centre uses the word *happier* (adjective) to express her joy after achieving her ideal body weight. Miss Eve Leong originally weighs 90.4kg and after joining the slimming programme her weight is less than 63kg. She claims that she has 'never been happier'. Her testimony seems to associate happiness and the attainment of an ideal body image as seen in the extract above (Extract 35).

> Extract 36
> Slogan for Expressions International - 'Life is a Celebration!'
> (EXP1 The Star 21 February 2006)

Extract 36 is a slogan for *Expressions International*. The slogan that has been chosen for this organization is 'Life is a Celebration'.

The advertiser chose the word *celebration* (noun) to describe the life of a woman who has achieved the ideal body image. The word *celebration* is used when someone holds a ceremony to signify a happy or joyful moment in his or her life. Therefore, by employing this word *celebration* in the promotional text, the advertiser is conveying the message that a woman who has an ideal body image is one who is happy and that is the occasion for a celebration.

4.3.2.2.6 Sense of Pride and the Ideal Body Image

Tseelon (1997) in her book "The Mask of Femininity" states that no matter what women do with their appearance, they are doing it with an awareness that they are "objects of the gaze of the other". Similarly, Baitrusaityte (2006) points out that women are aware and know that they are being looked at. Therefore, in this relation, Baitrusaityte (2006) claims that because women are expected to be beautiful, they are stigmatized if they do not conform to the standard set by the society.

From the data analyzed (see Extract 37 below), there are numerous examples that show women who attain a slim body as individuals who are filled with a sense of pride.

> Extract 37
>
> '*Terimee*'s numerous success stories have always been enviable. They led me to the decision to join *Terimee*. Now that I', in a much better shape, I've become the envy of others.' Chew Siew Ling , 32 years old, mother of 3 children
>
> (T2 The Star 27 Dec 2005)

The promotional text (Extract 37) features a testimony from a client who describes that before she attains her ideal body shape she was envious of the numerous success stories published by *Terimee Beauty Slimming Academy*. However, now that she is 'in a much better shape', she has 'become the *envy* (noun) of others'. Her testimony conveys the message that by having an ideal body shape, a woman will be filled with a great sense of pride.

Women who are successful in achieving slimmer body shapes after joining the slimming therapies are often advised to *flaunt*, *show off* and *unveil* their bodies. They are being taught that their slim bodies are something to be proud of. Extract 38 is a promotional text that reads 'Shape up & *flaunt* (verb) it! It's time to *show off* (verb) and make a lasting impression this festive season.'

> Extract 38
> Shape up & <u>Flaunt</u> it !
> It's time to <u>show off</u> and make a lasting impression this festive season.
> (Uni7 The Star 2 October 2006)

The potential clients are urged to improve their body shapes and show off their slimmer body to create a lasting impression during the festivities.

The headline of another text (Extract 39) reads as '*Unveil* (verb) Your True Beauty'.

> Extract 39
> <u>Unveil</u> Your True Beauty! (Headline)
> (SS2 The Star 16 February 2006)

The statement constructs the ideology that a woman who possesses a slim figure must be proud with her beautiful body shape. Therefore, her beautiful body which is her prized possession must be shown to the world.

4.3.2.2.7 Peace of Mind and the Ideal Body Image

Although it is not a popular notion, the promotional texts tend to associate the ideal body image with peace of mind. The testimony from Fish Leong, a client of *Cenosis Slimming Specialist* (Extract 40) states that after attaining a perfectly contoured body, she can wear whatever outfit she likes without having to *worry* (verb).

> Extract 40
> 'Like most women, I have always relied on clothes to hide my problem areas until I went to *Cenosis*. Now, I have a perfectly contoured body and can wear whatever I like without having to worry!' Fish Leong Asia Popular Artiste, Slimming Ambassador and Client of *Cenosis*
> (C15 The Star 18 September 2006)

The phrase 'without having to worry' associates peace of mind and the ideal body image. She also claims that previously she had to depend on clothing to hide her problem areas. According to this testimony, having an ideal body shape will give a woman the peace of mind when it comes to dressing up. This is because the cause for worry is eliminated by having a slim body.

In another excerpt (Extract 41), the advertiser is inviting the potential clients to visit their slimming centre to find out how to 'break free from weight *worries* (noun)'.

> Extract 41
> Come and join our open house celebration and find out how you can break free from weight worries.
> (Uni3 The Star 16 June 2006)

Again the word 'worries' implies that a woman will have peace of mind when she attains the ideal body.

4.3.2.2.8 The Object of Desire and The Ideal Body Image

According to Wolf (2002), a study which was conducted in the 1980's showed that 33,000 American women informed the researcher that if given a choice they would rather shed off ten to fifteen pounds of their weight than to achieve any other goal. Similarly, in another focus group study of adolescent girls by Tiggemann, Gardiner and Slater (2000), majority of the girls would rather have a thinner body than having straight A's. This shows that a slim figure is indeed the object of desire of many women including adolescent girls.

From the analysis, the data reveals that the majority of the promotional texts state that the ideal body image is the object of desire for women. The texts often sell this idea to women and describe women as 'dying' for the ideal body image. In Extracts 42 and 43, the advertiser is encouraging women to join the slimming therapy so that they can achieve the 'slim', 'slender' and 'sexier' figure that they have 'always *wanted* (verb)' or 'always *desired* (verb)'.

> Extract 42
> Dream Body Sculpting Programme has been developed by our slimming experts to give you what <u>you've always wanted</u>. A slim, slender and sexier body you can call your own.
> (SS3 The Star 4 May 2006)

> Extract 43
> Stay in shape and achieve the curves <u>you've always desired</u> with *iSlim*'s All-natural Fruits & Herbs Therapy. Call *iSlim* to discover how you can look good and feel great today.
> (IS1 The Star 22 February 2006)

The verbs *wanted* and *desired* suggest that the ideal body image is the object that women really yearn for. The adverb *always* that precedes the verbs *wanted* and

desired adds intensity to the verbs creating the meaning that the slim silhouette is something that women want to have all the time.

In another example (Extract 44) taken from the promotional text by *Unisense Health and Slimming Centre*, the phrase which reads 'getting closer to achieve that long desired body' gives the impression that women in general have been waiting to have the ideal body image for a long time.

> Extract 44
> Give yourself that perfect gift of a slimmer you by experiencing our '8 x 8' Slimming Programme while getting closer to achieving that long desired body, right here at *Unisense*.
>
> (Uni3 The Star 16 June 2006)

By using the adjective *long*, women are depicted as desiring for the ideal body shape for an extended period of time. Therefore, the advertisement is encouraging women to reward themselves with a perfect gift (i.e. the long desired ideal body shape) by joining the programme at the slimming centre.

Extract 45 which is the headline of a promotional text taken from *Keep Slim* echoes the same theme.

> Extract 45
> The weight you desire,
> The shape you admire.
>
> (KS3 The Star 13 November 2006)

In this example, women are persuaded to join the slimming programme to achieve the weight that they *desire* (verb) and the shape that they *admire* (verb). By using the verbs *desire* and *admire*, this promotional text is suggesting that women view the ideal body image as their prized possessions.

Similarly, Extract 46 is another example that describes the ideal body image as the 'figure of your *dreams* (noun)'.

> Extract 46
> Shine with radiance with *Phillip Wain's* star programmes at incredible value. Lose inches, sculpt the figure of your dreams, and look your radiant best as you relax and unwind at the hands of our professionals. Discover a new you at *Phillip Wain*, the leader in fitness and beauty, exclusively for women.
>
> (PW1 The Star 14 February 2006)

By describing the ideal body shape as the dream figure, the advertiser is constructing the notion that women in general are aiming to achieve such figure. Therefore, the text uses the noun *dreams* to paint the picture that the ideal body image is the quality that is highly sought after by women because it is very difficult to achieve as suggested by the word *dreams*.

4.4 Patriarchal Society and Women's Ideal Body Image

Hesse-Biber (1996) states that women's body weight is one of the most important determining factors when it comes to physical attractiveness. She highlights that in research studies that questioned people on what qualities were the most important indicator of "positive appearance", the key factor was weight. She further adds that a woman's sense of self-esteem depends on how attractive she is perceived by the opposite sex.

Hesse-Biber et. al. (2006) stress that the partnership of capitalist interests and patriarchal perspectives in the contemporary society are the socio-cultural driving force that pressures women to be thin. As a result, there is a tendency for women today to make the effort to achieve this cultural ideal of "ultra thinness" through self-imposed controls such as dieting, starvation and exercise.

Germov and Williams (1996 in Baitrusaityte, 2006) in their study on dieting women argue that “it is the internalization of patriarchal norms, rather than external coercion” that resulted in “self-regulation and the self disciplining of female bodies in the pursuit of the thin ideal”. They concluded that the attempt to overturn the thin ideal is a difficult task due to the wide spread patriarchal power relations through internalization. Baitrusaityte (2006) who has conducted a research on 25 Lithuanian women between 19 to 34 years old found that women were very concern on their body shape and tend to judge themselves very strictly. Some of them are not fully satisfied with their looks even though they are slim. Therefore, the wide spread of the patriarchal power that dictates the ideal body image for women is evidenced in the Western society. From the data analyzed in the print advertisement in my study, such patriarchal power has been also widely popularized by the slimming industry in this country.

Susan Brownmiller (1984), who is a feminist writer, argues that women are victims of a society that dictates them through their bodies by imposing impossible beauty ideals. She points out that these unrealistic ideals kept women in a subordinate position because women channel their energies to achieve the perfect body imposed by the society. She further adds that the requirement for women to be small or petite is driven by men’s desire to dominate. Brownmiller (1984) states that it is a fact that women carry 10 percent more fat cells than men. In fact, in majority of species, females are larger sex. However, fat is a property closely linked with solidity and power i.e. a quality not culturally acceptable for the female species.

Body image is a social construction. According to Fairclough’s (1995a) three dimensional framework, discourse must be examined at the level of text, discursive practice and social practice. In this study, the texts have been examined in the area of

lexical choices. In this section, the researcher will focus on the social practice in the Malaysian society to explain the reason behind the production and such text. The discursive practice will also be analyzed to explain the production and consumption of such texts.

As Malaysia is a patriarchal society, the social practice of this society plays an important part in the construction of the ideal female body image. In general, women in the Malaysian society and any patriarchal society have the desire to look beautiful and attractive in order to please their husbands or their male partners. The various ideologies or positive associations linked to the ideal female body image that have been analyzed in this study are resulted from the social practice of a patriarchal society. Some of the positive associations with regards to a woman's ideal body image that have been identified from the data of this study are beauty, self-confidence, health, success, achievement, happiness and sex appeal.

The mushrooming of slimming centres in Malaysia in the recent decade shows that there is an increasing demand for such services. The boom of this industry also shows that women in Malaysia are willing to part with their money in order to lose weight and achieve the slim ideal prescribed by the patriarchal society. The various testimonies by the clients of the slimming centres as appeared in the promotional texts analyzed show that Malaysian women agree to the values ingrained by the patriarchal culture on how an ideal Malaysian woman should look like i.e. slim and shapely. Not only do they agree with the construction of the ideal body shape, they also strive to achieve the slim ideal. The patriarchal culture in Malaysia has indeed played an important role in influencing the beauty ideology and belief system of the Malaysian women.

Moreover, due to globalization and the advancement of communication technology (i.e. satellite), the Malaysian society has the privileges to view the programmes produced by the Western society. As a result, they become accustomed with the values propagated by Hollywood's entertainment industry where slim and young women are the beauty icons who are highly revered by the Western patriarchal society.

As a result of the internalization of such beauty ideology, the promotional texts that emphasize on the positive attributes of women who attain the slim ideal are produced. The copywriters of the advertisements are also part of the Malaysian society who have been immersed with the ideology that equates a beautiful woman with one who possesses a slim figure.

4.5 The Discursive Practice of Advertising and Text Consumption

According to Fairclough (1995a), the connection between text and social practice is mediated by discursive practice. He explains that on one hand, the nature of the social practice shapes the processes of the text production and interpretation. On the other hand, the text is shaped by the production process while "the interpretative process operated upon 'cues' in the text" (Fairclough 1995a: 133).

Dominant forces in the society such as the mass media construct versions of reality favouring their interest. In the case of the print advertisements analyzed in this study, it is clear that the advertisers construct the ideal body image for women according to the constructed standards in order to achieve their sales target for the slimming services that they are promoting. As advertisement is a paid medium of communication, the advertisers who paid for the publication of their advertisements have the power to communicate any ideology that they wish regarding the ideal body image for women in this society.

Some of the slimming centres in Malaysia such as *Marie France Bodyline* and *Body Perfect* are franchise companies of which their franchisors' headquarters are in Switzerland and France respectively. The promotional texts may be written by the copywriters in the country of origin or the franchised company may be required to fulfill the requirements set by the franchisors e.g. the central theme for their advertisements to be published in the local newspapers.

There are many parties who are involved in the creation of a print advertisement, namely, the creative team from the advertising agency (i.e. the creative director and copy writer) and the product owner or advertiser who is normally

represented by the personnel from the advertising and marketing department. The process of creating a print advertisement involves many meetings between the advertising agency and the advertiser. During the meetings, various details pertaining to the print advertisement will be discussed. The artwork and the copy (i.e. text) of the advertisement will undergo countless revision before the advertiser finally agrees to the final artwork which will be sent to the press for publication according to the publication schedule that has been booked earlier.

In examining the discursive practice of the text, we must not overlook the role of a copy writer. The copy writer is a personnel who works for the advertising agency and is in charge of writing the copy (i.e. text) of the print advertisement. The copy writer plays an important role in communicating the desired message from the advertisers to the readers of the advertisements. He uses his linguistics skills and creativity to produce the copy of the advertisement according to the job brief given by the advertiser. Apart from the information given by the advertiser, the copy writer often draws on his background knowledge to create the advertising copy. As the copy writer is also a consumer and a member of this patriarchal society, he will to a certain extent be influenced by the belief system of this society. As such, the copy produced by the copy writer is shaped by the social practice of this society. Here, we can say that the text produced is 'constituted' by the social practice of this society. As a result of the interaction of the readers with the advertisement text, the discourse also shapes the social value and belief system of this society. Therefore, it is clear that discourse is in a dialectical relationship with the social practice as advocated by Fairclough (1995a: 131), i.e. discourse is constitutive (socially shaping) and constituted (socially shaped).

Finally, in examining the consumption of the promotional texts, 'background knowledge' (Fairclough, 1995a) of the readers of the advertisements is one important element that must be given due attention. In the case of slimming advertisements, 'background knowledge' will cause the readers to be less sensitive towards the ideological presentations of how an ideal female body should look like. In the context of this study, 'background knowledge' refers to the daily doses of information from the mass media especially from the entertainment industry. Due to globalization, the Malaysian society has the privileges to view the television programmes and movies featuring beauty queens, fashion models and actresses from the Hollywood where slim and shapely women are being elevated to the status of idols or goddesses. As a result of the constant media exposure, the Malaysian society will be immune to the ideological presentations that a slim body is the ideal body shape for women. In contrast, fat women are often presented as unlovely and unpopular in the media.

Thus, with the rich 'background knowledge' on what constitutes an ideal body image for women, the strategies of lexicalization employed in the promotional texts will be deemed as 'non-ideological common sense' (Fairclough 1995a: 28). The aim of this research is to elucidate the 'naturalisation' (Fairclough 1995a: 28) of the ideological representations and expose the effects of discourse (in this case, the textual analysis of the lexical choices) that are opaque to the Malaysian women. Note that the lexical analysis in the earlier sections of this study had deliberated on this matter in great length.

Due to the constant bombardment of the ideology that women's ideal body image is that of slim and slender, the Malaysian society will accept and deem the strategy of positive and negative lexicalization employed in the promotional texts as

truth rather than construct. It is not uncommon that when women are being asked on what an ideal woman's body shape should be like, they would automatically say that the ideal body shape must be slim and shapely. The adjective 'ideal' has become synonymous with the adjective 'slim'. This shows that discourse has the ability to shape the society or as Fairclough (1995b) puts it: "Discourse is socially constitutive" (Fairclough 1995b: 55). In the context of print advertisement, discourse has indeed contributes to the construction of the knowledge and belief system of the Malaysian society, particularly women.

4.6 Conclusion

The analysis reveals that among the most commonly used strategies to construct the ideal body image for women are negative lexicalization, negative labeling, positive lexicalization and positive association. By using negative lexicalization and negative labeling, the promotional texts construct their versions of reality for the non-ideal female form. On the other hand, positive lexicalization and positive association are used to describe the ideal female form.

The promotional texts draw positive association between the ideal female form with certain qualities and values. The advertisers associate women with the ideal body shapes with qualities such as positive self esteem, success, health, happiness, sense of pride and peace of mind. The promotional texts also depicted the ideal body shape as the object of desire for every woman.

From the analysis, the researcher gathers several ideological positioning created by the promotional texts with regards to the ideal and non-ideal body image for women in Malaysia. According to the promotional texts, a beautiful woman is one who

has a slim body shape. Women with excess body fats fall under the category of the non-ideal body shapes. Thus, their body shapes are not aesthetically pleasing. The texts also claim that having a fat body makes a woman feels inadequate and can lead to low self esteem. Women who have given birth are not exempted from this ideological construct. They are expected to conform to the ideal female form propagated by the advertisements.

As Malaysia is a patriarchal society, the texts producers who are part of this society will be influenced by their background knowledge when constructing an advertising text. The readers of the texts who are also members of this society will consume the texts with the same background knowledge. Thus, the ideological positioning in the promotional texts will appear as 'non-ideological common sense' (Fairclough 1995a: 28).

This study shows that the ideal body image for women constructed by the promotional texts is that of slim, shapely, firm and smooth. By employing Fairclough's (1995a) 3 dimensional framework, the researcher is able to demonstrate that the social practice (i.e. patriarchal culture) and discursive practice of the Malaysian society have contributed to the production of the promotional texts examined in this study.